



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Special Considerations When Removing a Child After Hours 1-28-2013

Due to the severe emotional impact to a child and family associated with placement and separation, the crisis that precipitated the need for placement, and the legal ramifications of initiating such an extreme action, a SPRU Worker must consult the SPRU Supervisor BEFORE initiating a removal. See [CP&P-II-D-1-500](#), When a SPRU Worker Is Required to Contact the SPRU Supervisor. If unable to contact the on-call SPRU Supervisor, the SPRU Worker is required to consult the Casework Supervisor or the Local Office Manager assigned to/responsible for the SPRU case before he or she removes the child.

For a comprehensive discussion about removals, see [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#), Removal of a Child.

Medical Examinations and Treatment After Hours 1-28-2013

SPRU Workers are encouraged to consult their SPRU Supervisors regarding any issues relevant to obtaining medical examinations or treatment for children after hours. Issues include child protective services concerns, confidentiality considerations (particularly around HIV-related matters), authority to provide consent, payment issues, and agency or personal liability issues. A Medical/Pediatric Consultant is on call to the DCF After-Hours Response System for guidance. See [CP&P-II-D-2-200](#), DCF Office of Child Health Services Doctors.

Unless parental rights have been terminated, obtaining a medical consent from the child's parent(s) or guardian -- regardless of whether the child resides at home or in CP&P-approved placement -- is preferable to CP&P providing such consent.

For issuing consent to psychotropic medication, see the DCF [Psychotropic Medication Policy](#).

Child in Need of Psychiatric Hospitalization - Services Provided by SPRU 1-28-2013

If a SPRU Worker is activated to wait with a child at a hospital until a hospital bed becomes available, that Worker should:

- Advocate for the child's placement into an appropriate hospital bed/treatment program as expeditiously as possible;
- Ensure that the child's immediate, physical needs are met while he or she awaits treatment. Advocate for the child's needs with hospital emergency room staff, if necessary (e.g., ensure he or she is fed, he or she has a quiet place to rest, etc.);
- Ensure that the child does not harm him or herself or others (involve hospital security, if necessary);
- Counsel and support the child while the child awaits admittance;
- Notify the SPRU Supervisor of the need for a back-up plan, if it appears that the wait will be two hours or longer.

The next work day the SPRU Coordinator advises Local Office/county administration of the situation, to:

- Bring the issue to the attention of management;
- Document and track such case situations/problems with specific hospitals/providers;
- Outline any resultant SPRU coverage problems;
- Advocate for resolution, including development of affiliation agreements with hospital staffs and/or local provider agencies; and
- Advocate for the development of purchase-of-service agreements with local providers.

Request to Remove a Child from a Resource Family Home After Hours 1-28-2013

See [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#), Removal of a Child.

Any change or disruption in a child's placement must be carefully thought out because it may jeopardize the child's capacity to trust his or her environment and the adults around him or her. It can have serious negative consequences to the child's sense of security and self-worth. See [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#), section entitled Situations When Removal Should Be Considered.

Changes in placement should only be made with planning and care, to ensure:

- The child understands what is taking place and why,
- Attempts to resolve presenting problems and preserve the current placement have been undertaken, and have failed,
- A plan to return the child home or reunite him or her with family is considered and ruled out first, as appropriate,
- Educational stability (see [CP&P-VII-A-1-700](#), Education of Children in Out-of-Home Placement),
- Steps are initiated, as necessary, to locate an appropriate, least restrictive setting for the child.

Pursuant to an agreement signed by all resource parent providers and CP&P, 15 days notice must be given by the resource parent prior to any removal of a child (see [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#)), to enable CP&P to make suitable, safe alternative placement arrangements. The only exceptions are:

- The child is at risk of serious physical or emotional harm if he or she remains in the resource home;
- The resource family is, or perceives itself to be, at risk of harm if the child remains in the resource home;
- The resource family has experienced or is experiencing a personal emergency and is unable to make alternate plans for the child; or
- The resource parent(s) is threatening to abandon the child and/or the child is threatening to run away unless CP&P removes him or her.

Removal from a resource home after hours, on weekends, or holidays may be particularly disruptive and detrimental to the child because the above process is violated. Additional reasons why a **child should not be moved after hours** include:

- An emergency resource home placement or shelter care is only a short term, interim placement, thus necessitating another placement, another disruption for the child, perhaps as early as the next work day;
- Re-placement could wield a negative impact on the child's educational stability (CP&P initiates steps, as necessary, to ensure that the child is able to continue to attend the same school - his or her "home" school, if possible. See [CP&P-VII-A-1-700](#));

- Emergency resource homes/shelters are few in number and, therefore, are only utilized when necessary;
- Emergency homes/shelters may not meet the child's specific or immediate needs;
- The SPRU Worker, unlike the child's assigned Worker, is a stranger to the child, the resource parent, and the emergency home provider, and, therefore, can offer only limited solace and support to the child and substitute care provider at this stressful, difficult juncture.

If a resource parent requests that SCR and/or SPRU remove a foster child immediately from his or her home, a prompt assessment of emergency service availability is conducted by the assigned SPRU Worker, to determine whether any of the following would provide sufficient relief:

- Mobile Crisis outreach;
- Homemaker services;
- Day or respite care;
- Mental/behavioral health/supportive counseling; and/or
- Emergency funds.

The SPRU Worker makes reasonable efforts to stabilize the placement until the next work day. If the resource parent persists in his or her request to have the child removed, however, the resource parent should be:

- Encouraged to keep the child until the next work day, when the substitute care provider can consult the assigned Worker and/or Supervisor. He or she is told that SCR and, if necessary, SPRU will submit a report which will be directed to that Worker/Supervisor at the start of next work day, advising him or her of the crisis in the resource home;
- Counseled to put the events, child's behavior, and other cause(s) for the request for removal into perspective. Alternative arrangements should be discussed and their feasibility assessed;
- Sensitized to the process of changing placements during non-business hours, as opposed to during the work day, when full agency and community resources are available; and
- Reminded of the agreement to provide the agency with 15 days prior notification.

When, and if, the foster child must be removed from placement, the SPRU Worker seeks input from the assigned Worker/Supervisor, to secure background information on the child, to be given to the emergency placement provider to assist with the child's adjustment; a case history update and a status report on the parent's readiness for the child to return home; and/or whether there are any interested relatives.

The SPRU Worker must advise the SPRU Supervisor of the plan to change the child's placement (see [CP&P-II-D-1-535](#), section entitled When a SPRU Worker is Required to Contact the SPRU Supervisor). The Supervisor may want to notify Local Office, Area Office, or Senior Staff, based on the nature and/or history of the particular case.

Before re-placing/moving the child to a new resource home or to a relative's home, the SPRU Worker contacts SCR and requests an NJ SPIRIT check on the new or prospective provider, to confirm that the resource home is licensed and in "approved" status, or that an identified relative is not known to CP&P. See [CP&P-II-D-2-300](#), Screening Kin Caregivers and Clearing DCF Resource Family Homes through NJS.

The SPRU Worker consults the SPRU Coordinator the next work day, if he or she feels that the resource parent(s) was inappropriate in his or her actions and/or request to have the child removed from the home. The SPRU Coordinator may then share this information with the assigned Worker's Supervisor and the Local Office Resource Family Support Unit.

Domestic Violence Referrals and Reports 1-28-2013

See DCF/CP&P domestic violence policy and procedures when domestic violence is alleged or co-occurs with child abuse and/or neglect, current domestic violence laws, and information on domestic violence services in:

- [CP&P-VIII-B-1-100](#), Domestic Violence;
- The [DCF Domestic Violence Protocol](#).

Whether to See the "Other" Parent 1-28-2013

If a SPRU Worker investigates an incident which appears to be unconfirmed, and there is a parent or another child/sibling who resides outside the family home in a separate household, the SPRU Worker consults the SPRU Supervisor as to the need for SPRU to see that non-offending parent or child to complete the CPS investigation, or if the matter can be held for day staff follow up. The SPRU Supervisor determines whether the SPRU Worker should make the contact, and, if not possible that day, whether the matter should be re-referred to the next day's SPRU Worker. If the other parent or child resides in another county, the SPRU Supervisor determines whether SCR should assign the matter to another county's SPRU operation as a secondary assignment.

Children Left at Day Care Centers Beyond Closing - The SPRU Worker's Role 1-28-2013

A child may be inadvertently left by a parent at a day care center due to various reasons/circumstances -- an action/failure to act which may or may not be due to neglect. As a general rule, CP&P will take no action to intervene until one (1) hour beyond the time the child was to be picked up by the parent or caregiver.

Upon receipt of such an assignment from SCR, the SPRU Worker shall:

- Contact the reporter to ensure that there is no change in the circumstances of the reported situation;
- Attempt to contact the parent/caregiver by telephone, cell, and/or home visit;
- Attempt to contact any family resource through the telephone/contact numbers provided by the reporter;
- Meet with the child to ascertain whether another resource can be identified.

If the parent/caregiver or a relative/resource cannot be found or identified, and the child must be placed, the situation is handled as an emergency removal without parental consent; see [CP&P-II-C-2-700](#), section entitled Emergency Removal Without a Court Order Under Title 9. The SPRU Worker leaves a letter, Notice of Emergency Removal, CP&P Form [21-6](#), at the client home, and provides a copy to the day care center. The child is examined by a physician prior to placement. The SPRU Worker then places the child with a relative (see [CP&P-IV-B-2-125](#), Placing Children with Kinship Caregivers), in a licensed resource home, or in a juvenile shelter, as appropriate.